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# Developing a Model of Organizational Trauma in Iran's Sports and Youth Departments

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|---|---|
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## 1. Round 1

### *1.1. Reviewer 1*

Reviewer:

The paragraph stating that "The organizational trauma literature indicates that trauma can originate from multiple interacting sources rather than a single event" should be revised to provide a more explicit theoretical architecture for the proposed study. The subsequent empirical model contains causal conditions, contextual factors, intervening factors, strategies, a central phenomenon, and consequences, yet the Introduction does not adequately explain why these six categories were theoretically expected before the empirical analysis. The authors should connect this logic to a clearly articulated paradigm or process model so that the qualitative findings do not appear post hoc.

The manuscript states in the Methods that "This study employed an applied mixed-methods research design using a sequential exploratory strategy in which the qualitative phase preceded and informed the quantitative phase." This is appropriate, but the rationale for choosing an exploratory sequential mixed-methods design should be made more explicit. The authors should explain why an existing validated organizational trauma instrument or model was insufficient for the Iranian Sports and Youth context and why qualitative model development was necessary before quantitative validation. This would strengthen methodological coherence between the research gap and design.

The manuscript reports CVR and CVI based on 15 experts and states that "all retained components met the predefined content-validity criteria." However, the Results mainly present construct-level conclusions rather than showing whether validation occurred at the item level. The authors should specify whether CVR and CVI were calculated for individual questionnaire items, components, or dimensions. If items failing the thresholds were removed or revised, the manuscript should report how many items were initially generated, how many were deleted or modified, and how many remained in the final questionnaire.

The qualitative reliability assessment reports test–retest agreement of 86.07% and inter-coder agreement of 84.96%. Although these values suggest consistency, simple percentage agreement does not correct for chance agreement. The authors should justify the use of this reliability metric and, if the raw coding data permit, consider reporting a more robust coefficient such as Cohen's kappa, Krippendorff's alpha, or another appropriate inter-coder reliability statistic. The manuscript should also explain how coding disagreements were resolved and whether consensus coding affected the final codebook.

The quantitative sampling paragraph states that "328 managers and deputy managers" were recruited using convenience sampling from a population of 2,215. The authors should distinguish clearly between the target sample estimated from the Morgan table and the actual number of completed, valid questionnaires analyzed. They should additionally report response rate, exclusion criteria for incomplete questionnaires, missing-data handling, and whether respondents were distributed across provinces in a manner that reasonably represented the national administrative structure. National-level claims should be qualified if geographic representation was uneven.

Authors revised the manuscript and uploaded the new document.

### *1.2. Reviewer 2*

Reviewer:

In the Study Design and Participants section, the statement that qualitative participants were "experts in organizational behavior and human resource management within the field of sports organizations" requires a more operational definition of expertise. The manuscript should report the eligibility criteria used for recruitment, such as minimum years of managerial or academic experience, academic rank, relevant publications, organizational position, or direct familiarity with Sports and Youth Departments. Without explicit eligibility criteria, it is difficult to evaluate whether the 14 participants possessed sufficient knowledge to support model development.

The qualitative sampling procedure is described as snowball sampling and states that "saturation was reached after the fourteenth interview." This claim requires stronger methodological documentation. The authors should explain how saturation was assessed prospectively, whether code saturation or meaning saturation was used, at which interview new codes ceased to emerge, and whether one or more additional interviews were conducted to confirm saturation. A saturation table or concise description of the progression of new codes across interviews would substantially improve transparency and reproducibility.

The manuscript refers to "structured interviews with open-ended responses," while the description of the interview process indicates substantial flexibility for participants to elaborate on experiences. This terminology should be reconsidered because the procedure appears closer to a semi-structured interview than a strictly structured interview. The authors should clarify the interview format, indicate whether probing questions were permitted, report the approximate interview duration, interview setting or mode, audio-recording procedures, transcription method, and whether participants reviewed transcripts or interpretations.

The interview protocol includes the question "How do natural, environmental, human, organizational, political, cultural, and social factors provide the context for organizational trauma?" This formulation may introduce substantial researcher-driven categorization before data collection and therefore risks leading participants toward predetermined domains. The authors should discuss how they minimized confirmatory bias and whether these domains were derived from literature or pilot interviews. If the purpose was inductive model development, the manuscript should demonstrate that the coding process remained open to categories outside these predefined areas.



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The Data Analysis section reports the use of "open, axial, and theoretical coding" together with "thematic content analysis" and a "paradigmatic structure." These analytic traditions are not methodologically identical. Open, axial, and theoretical/selective coding are commonly associated with grounded theory, whereas thematic content analysis follows a different analytic logic. The authors should clearly identify the methodological framework actually used, explain the coding stages within that framework, and ensure consistent terminology throughout the manuscript. If a hybrid approach was intentionally adopted, its methodological justification should be explicitly provided.

Table 1 in the Findings reports six qualitative dimensions, whereas the later structural model contains eight domains—"socio-cultural, economic–financial, temporal–contextual, organizational–performance, political–legal, emotional–psychological, technological–informational, and physical." The manuscript currently does not explain adequately how the six paradigmatic dimensions identified qualitatively were transformed into the eight structural dimensions assessed quantitatively. This is a major conceptual discontinuity. The authors should provide a clear mapping showing which qualitative codes or components generated each of the eight quantitative constructs and explain why these constructs differ from the six higher-order categories.

The quantitative instrument is described as a "researcher-developed organizational trauma questionnaire," but crucial measurement information is missing. The manuscript should report the total number of items, number of items per construct, response scale and anchors, scoring procedure, possible score range, handling of reverse-scored items, pilot-testing procedures, and the process used to transform qualitative codes into questionnaire items. Because the principal contribution of the study is model development, transparent documentation of instrument construction is essential.

Authors revised the manuscript and uploaded the new document.

## 2. Revised

Editor's decision after revisions: Accepted.
Editor in Chief's decision: Accepted.



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